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Table 11: (APPENDIX III)

Functional Calendar of Seasons and Human Activities among the Highland-Plateau Ambara

Months: Abyssinian Calendar (Julian) in Amharic	Months: Equivalent in Western (Gregorian) Calendar	Climatic Seasons on Abyssinian High-Plateau:	Annual Cycle of Ambara Ecological Activities (Economics, Agriculture, etc.)	Annual Cycle of Religious Seasons and Activities among Coptic-Abyssinian Ambara.	Cycle of Ambara Social Events	Syncretism	New Ethiopian Civic Events on National Calendar
Mäskäräm 1	Sept. 11	receding flood after rainy season; yellow 'mäsqäl' daisy carpets land; spring ('täbäya').	place beehive basket-work in trees (swarming season); pasture is in flower; plowing new or fallow field for later cultivation, while soil is still fairly soft ('gät').	17th Mäskäräm: Feast of the (true) Cross ('mäsqäl Mäsq'); public rejoicing around bonfire (demmära). Minor: 1st Mäskäräm is St. John's Day. 11th: 'Arafa' - (Reunion of Adam and Eve)	His visiting when paths passable; children bring New Year flower bouquets ('enqutatash') on and after 1st (St. John's Day); and receive promise of new clothes for Mäsqäl.		'Mäsqäl' is now also a national holiday: Emperor appears at bonfire (Sept. 27th).
to	to						
Mäskäräm 30	Oct. 10						
Təqəmt 1	Oct. 11	sunny growing & ripening season (mäkäl ega).	Remove honey from hive. Harvest first barley ('gebs'), thresh and winnow it for roasting or beer-making ('tällä'); sell honey to make mead ('täj'); children guard harvest against birds and baboons.	12th Təqəmt: St. Michael's Feast 'Mikael'; services followed by picnics in countryside. Local: 9th: pilgrimage to 'tabot' holy wells and waterfalls of Abbot Mäffe Qeddus (Abe).	outdoor games of children: boys make bullroarers ('gurgurensoch') to frighten birds away, shoot pebbles at baboons from slingshots. Girls dance rounds and greet storks arriving 'from Jerusalem'.		Annual commemoration of Coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie, Nov 2nd. (Təqəmt 23rd).
to	to						
Təqəmt 30	Nov. 9						

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Hedar 1 to Hedar 30	Nov. 10 to Dec. 9	ripening of later cereal grains; sunny, occasional hazy mists.	harvest of cereal grains, esp. early "yeff" for bread; "mog" and "talba" oilseeds. Teamwork in harvest and hut construction; boys take cattle from sun-scorched upland to green valleys.	12th Hedar: "Mikeal" Feast, with picnics, in other localities. Minor: 4th "Queraam"-clergy ends 40-day fast. Local: 21st "Hima" Festival at Aksum; Sumo' holiday.	Flirting season (esp. of adolescents) begins on "Mikeal": fresh togas, beautification; tattooing (esp. adult divorced women). 21st: Church student holiday.		
Tahsas 1 to Tahsas 30	Dec. 10 to Jan. 8	Summer ("belg"), hot, sunny, occasional light rains. Red aloes on rocks and thorny plants dominate marked landscape. Rivers become brooks, brooks go dry.	Finish main harvests. Peasants take "yeff" etc. to market in towns. Seeding of "summer barley" on irrigated fields. Traders organize caravans: produce and hides for salt and imports, coffee etc., cattle pastured in valleys.	19th Tahsas: "Gabriel" Feast-(because he came to Mary announcing Jesus' coming), esp. at Gulubi near Dire Dawa. 29th Tahsas: Christmas ("Ledet", or "Gena"), with all-night church services and special chants.	19th-29 is traditional hockey ("Gena") season, with climax on Christmas. Judges begin riding their circuit to hear litigations (land tenure, damages, etc.).		19th: Emp. Haile Selassi travels to Gulubi(for "Gabriel"). 29th: Emperor receives students, in traditional toga and jodphurs.
Ter 1 Ter 30	Jan. 9 Feb. 7	Height of dry summer ("belg"). Some digestible rivers considered poisonous for cattle.	Harvest irrigated garden crops: peas (shombera), plant (gemba) (cabbage). Sell produce for taxes, and to buy salt, hot peppers, coffee.	Holy month: 11th Ter is "Temqit"(Epiphany), holiest day of year: processions to specially erected pool, with sacred "tabot"(tablet), blessing of water for the coming light rains. 6th: "Geerá"(Circumcision of Jesus). 19th: "Giyorgis" (St. George) 21st: "Astkeyo Maryam" (Mary)	Targatheorers collect for govt. for landlords, rent and gifts for the church. On the 11th (Epiphany), young men perform horse tournament("gugs") women are coiffured, henna-reddened palms. Climax of flirting.	secondary among Falashas as harvest fest. 12th monday	On Epiphany, Jan. 19th Pentecost (11th Ter), ("mayrik") traditional costume.	Emperor H.S. receives foreign diplomats in

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Yäkatit 1	Feb. 8	dry; east wind brings puffy clouds (and hungry locusts) some ripening of wild fruits.	late barley("adja gebs") matures on irrigated fields and is harvested; price of sheep and other meat doubles (due to heavy meat-eating just before lenten season) 11th-20th ("sted amus").	Lenten Fast "kudade" (lit. suffering) begins after the 22nd, for 55 days though called "arba tom" (Fast of 40). 8th-10th is 3-day fast of Ninivah ("Tsomä Nänïwe"). 16th is feast "Kidusa Mikrat".	Housewives during the long Lent must show skill with vegetable dishes and spices, (even butter and milk are not allowed). Happy dancing on 14th: Jesus promised to save.	eve of 22nd: annual convention of "zar" spirit doctors.	On 12th(Feb. 19th) memorial services for Graziani massacre 1937 On 23rd(Mar. 2nd) Adua Victory(1896) celebrated.
to	to						
Yäkatit 30	Mar. 9						
Mägabit 1	Mar. 10	dry; burning of Bush to keep locusts away, and new fields (slash-and-burn).	cultivated fruit(peach) ripens; garden crops are harvested for Lent food; commercial caravans hurry to complete tours before rains; cattle is pastured far into bush.	Minor, because of Lent: 5th "Abo-Gäbre Mänfäs Qeddus" worship and dance on Mt. Zuqwala. 19th "Debrä Zayt" commemorating Mount of Olives feast in Jerusalem 27th "Medhane Alïm" =(Savior)	Youngsters pasturing cattle in far bush have liberty for games and hazing, hut-building, etc. No weddings in Lent.		
to	to						
Mägabit 30	April 8						
Miyazya 1	April 9	Light rains begin, Autumn ("bïga"). As soon as soil softens, plowings begin.	refreshed by drizzles, peasants trade for new iron plowpoints and prepare soil, esp. after Lent. Prices of meat, even grain and pepper double for Easter feasting, so buyers travel far from towns. No work during Passion week("gemamat") before Easter.	Severe fast during last 3 days of Lent,"seqlät" Good Friday on the 15th. All-night services eve of the 17th, Fasaika(Easter) wearing green reeds on forehead("qetema") given by priests Sat. morning. Resurrection("tenasä") announced 4 A.M. Sunday, meat-feast begins.	Second big wedding season from Easter to heavy rains, so unmarried girls wash clothes, redden palas, watch young men at javelin throwing and ball ("genchebt") games.	17th: Muslims (on Easter) celebrate "Sheykh Abader" water saint.	27th(May 5th): Annual commemoration return & restoration of Haile Selassie in May 1941, ("[illegible]") entry into Addis Ababa
to	to						
Miyazya 30	May 8						

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Gembot 1	May 9	light rains; spots of fresh, green grass (for pasturage nearer home). Storks fly northward.	Women prepare fuel for rainy season: deadwood; piles of sun-dried cowdung, coated with layer of mud. Caravans hurry home from Sudan, etc. Fish "sanro" caught in rivers.	1st: Lodata (Birthday of Virgin Mary): After services, last, large, outdoor picnic, under "dase" shelter 24th: "Tekli Hayamanot" day, pilgrimage to his holy well at Debre Libanos. Children sing of country's well-being to storks.	1st: Men and women celebrate outdoor picnic separately, but young folk meet while elder ones feast on meat and barley beer.	
to	to					
Gembot 30	June 7					
Sanye 1	June 8	Heavy rains, winter "Kermet" begin: fogs, storms, cold rain. Fishing season. Children are taught to swim before rivers are dangerous.	Intensive plowing of softened soil, seeding by broadcasting: barley, then tyeff, wheat. Beans and other garden crops are seeded and fenced. Fish is plentiful and cheap.	9th: Resumption of Wednesday and Friday "Fast of the Salvation" recessed since Easter. Clergy: "Parhelites" 6th-feast; 7th "tsomä hawaryat" - 1 month Fast of Apostles.	Master gives feast to retainers for plowing, "anf mäjay", with fried fish, beer, "asmari" music, and "betu" dance. Mutual aid in hut repair.	
to	to					
Sanye 30	July 7					
Hamle 1	July 8	Heavy monsoon rains, sometimes tornadoes. sheets of rain almost daily. Cold	Indoor work; some minor hut repairs.	Intensive church school for boys, who are not needed at this season for any other work. Clergy: 5th: Fast of Peter and Paul ends month Fast of Apostles.	Standstill (e.g. of visiting) due to swollen brooks and washed-out paths.	16th(July 23) Birthday ("Ledit") of Emp. Haile Selassie; praise hymns changed in churches.
to	to					
Hamle 30	August 6					

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Mäskäräm 1 to Mäskäräm 30	August 7 to Sept. 5	Heavy rains; fishing easy in muddy, turbulent rivers.	Some sow a bit of "Tiff and "Idja" barley, to have it late in harvest. Cattle taken to upland.	7th: Trinity ("Selassye"); parade, despite rain, with "Tabot". 13th: Transfiguration of Jesus ("Bahe", "Debrä Tabor") feast, with torchlight parade.	13th: mock battles with whips ("jeref") fought by young men in afternoon, between hamlets and individuals. Younger children badger adults for gifts in morning.	7th: Pictures of Emp. H.S. carried in parade, because Trinity is his namesake; flags, etc.
Pagumen 1 2 3 4 5	Sept. 6 7 8 9 10	Rains broken by occasional sunshine.	End of tradit. fiscal year: "Wigadras" had to account to the feudal lord for dues he had collected from merchants.	3rd: Feast of St. Raphael, the water saint, bathing in his holy water. 5th: Eve of feast of St. John: bury "Lefafa sedeq", surroll; bathe.	3rd: Examination of boys in church school to decide who will be deacons; so some use drugs as stimulant. Younger children collect peas for good harvests in new year.	

Ethiopia. The uplands, even though they lie close to the equator, are pleasantly cool at night during the long dry season, and abundant monsoon rains from the Indian Ocean pour down between June and September.

Rainfall averages approximately 47 inches annually at Addis Ababa[1] and considerably more in the area around Lake Tana. An average of 81% of the rain falls during the three-month rainy season, and about 13% during the irregular light rains in April and May.[2] The water-table remains high during most of the dry season, even when most rivers have dried up, so that irrigation and terrace farming are possible. Both have been practiced, though neither extensively nor intensively, since ancient times.

The Amhara divides the climatic year into the long dry season, Bälg, which lasts until the beginning of the "little rains", and the 3 to 4 month rainy season, kerämt, which the modern-educated Amhara translates as "winter". Terms subdividing these seasons differ locally, which is not surprising considering the extent to which climate is dominated by local topography.

While the long dry season is climatically monotonous, the rainy season is in daily, dramatic flux. It is the season of tornadoes, often dangerous. On a relatively dry day during the rainy season, usually in the early afternoon, a whirlwind (called Täro) may occur which can even

1. US Dept. of Commerce: "Ethiopia", OIT Vol.2, No.12, May 1947, 4 pp.
2. Hann, Jul: Handbuch der Klimatologie, 1908-1911, Vol.2, p. 181.

779 The sacerdotal emphasis is so strong that efforts of the emperor to introduce preaching(of ethics, restraint in mourning, etc.) have been quietly ignored by the church, except for some polite and occasional attempts to please the emperor in Addis Ababa by fulfilling his wish in his own church.

b) The Annual Cycle of the Church Calendar, and its function.

805 The calend ar of Abyssinia is based on the Julian calendar of Rome, but the year begins September 11th, following the ancient Egyptian usage. The year has 12 months of 20 days each, plus 5 or 6 intercalar days at the end (the extra day once every 4 years). Historically this calendar probably came to Abyssinia from Alexandria, early in the ecclesiastical jurisdiction. However, Syrian usage was followed by the Abyssinian church in the practice of establishing feast and fast days in commemoration of martyrs under Diocletian and Syrian bishops of that period.

After Islam conquered Egypt, ecclesiastical computations continued to arrive, though often interrupted, through the Coptic Abuna sent from Alexandria, These computations arrived in the Arabic language, were translated into Geez, and collectively called "Abushaker" (Father of the Moon), after the book originally compiled by the author Demetros, who claimed to have received them by revelation from the Holy Ghost.

This calendar is about 7 to 8 years behind the

805 Gregorian, so that, prior to September 11th, the Western 1956 A.D. corresponds to the Abyssinian 1948 A.M., "amä-tä mehrät" (year of grace). The same year is regarded by the Abyssinian church as 7448 "amäta aläm" (year of Creation); and 1672 "semaetat amät" (era of martyrs). There is a 4-year cycle of apostles, so that 1954 A.D. (1946 A.M.) was the year of Mark, "zämmänä marqos wängelawi".

796 805 In the annual cycle of religious events, the dates of each holy day are further commemorated by monthly repetition of a shadow-like minor holyday. Christmas is commemorated every month on the 29th, because it falls on the 29th day of the month of Tahsas. This reminder is utilized also in everyday layman's temporal affairs, and the agreement to meeti is expressed by individuals as "I shall meet you on Täklä Haymanot", since everyone knows this means the 24th day of the month. The following religious dates are commonly utilized by the laymen for secular purposes:

Table 8: Dates of the Religious Calendar Utilized for Secular Purposes.

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1st day of the month - "Ledäta", birthday of the Virgin Mary.

5th - "Abbo", or "Gabra Manfas Qeddus". Both important saints, whose actual anniversaries fall in the rainy season.

12th - "Mikael", as a reminder of the miracles ascribed to this arch-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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angel. On his actual day, a popular public picnic is held--a major social event.

16th - "Kidanä Mehrät" (Covenant of Mercy). This is a preferred monthly day on which mahabber sodalities like to gather for private group communion.

19th day of the month- "Tahsas Gabriël". Reminder of the miracles ascribed to this archangel.

21st - "Sionä Maryam". Reminder of the annual event of the revelation of Mary after her death.

23rd - "Giyorgis". St. George's day.

24th - "Täklä Haymanot". Abyssinian head of church, now sainted, who re-established the "Solomon Dynasty."

27th - "Medhane Alëm" (Redeemer of the World), i.e. Jesus.

28th - "Emmanuel". Another reference to Jesus.

29th - "Bäala Egziabhër" (Festival of God), or, "Balä Wold", festival of the birth of Jesus, monthly reminder of Christmas.

796 When the floods of the rainy season recede in early September, the yellow daisy carpets the pasture and the tall green grain begins to mature, the new year begins, with the month Mäskäräm. This heralds the first

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[539] from the bin of peas
fill me up."

Thereupon the householder gives them a handful of shembera peas, which they roast to "qolo", and this symbol, too, is considered to invite a good crop.

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805 The 5th or last day of Pagumēn is the annual feast day of St. John. The "tabot" from his church is carried to water very early in the morning, and the men bathe in the river. The old year is symbolically buried, in some regions, by ceremonial burial of the book "Lefafa Tsedeq" (Scroll of Righteousness) which resembles in part the ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead. The day is traditionally also the end of the fiscal budget year, on which the nagadras, the appointee over commerce, had to pay the feudal tribute to his lord (at least a large jar of beer and 20 enjara breads) in addition to squaring his accounts.

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That evening torches are lit, for this is the beginning of a new year.

c) The Religious Life Cycle of the Lay Individual.

852 Baptism usually occurs after 40 days for boys, still later for girl babies, sometimes as long as 80 days. This practice is based on Old Testament patterns, and more directly, on the period of 40 days that the Virgin Mary herself had to segregate herself from the Temple after the birth of Jesus. (The Falasha Jews of Abyssinia is concerned less that a baby might die

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

they take what they have, and they do not choose to provide more than what they require and is necessary for them. 554

In no part that he went about in were there butchers' shops, except at the Court, and no person of the common people may kill a cow (even though it is his own) without leave from the lord of the country. 253

The people speak the truth little, even when they make oath, unless they swear by the head of the King. They much fear excommunication, and if they are ordered to do something, and that it be to their prejudice, they do it from fear of excommunication. 695 [688]

The oath is administered in this manner. They go to the door of the church with two priests, and they have there incense and embers, and he who has to swear puts his hands upon the church door, and one the priests tells him of the oath to speak the truth, and that if he speaks falsely, that as the lion swallows his prey in the woods, so may his soul be swallowed by the devil; and as the wheat is broken between the stones, so may his bones be ground by the devils; and he who swears, at each thing answers Amen; and as the fire burns wood, so may your soul be burned in the fire of hell and made dust. He says Amen. And this if you do not speak truth; he says Amen. And if you speak truth, may your life be prolonged with honour, and your soul in paradise with the blest. He says Amen. And this ended, he gives his testimony.

He says that the movable feasts, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, are celebrated on the same days and seasons that we celebrate them. The birth of Christ, Circumcision, Epiphany, and other feasts of saints also agree with us, and others not. The year and months begin on the 29th day of August, on which was the beheading of St. John, and the year is of twelve months, and the month of thirty days. When the year is ended, there are five days over, which they call pagomen, which means fulfilment of the year, and in the bissextile year there are six days over; so they keep with us. 796 805

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

the imperfection was, by all manner of means, to be removed; so that the Catholics, as well as the Cophts, in Egypt, undergo excision ever since. This is done with a knife, or razor, by women, generally when the child is about eight years old *. 304

There is another ceremony, with which I shall close, and this regards the women also, and I shall call it *incision*. This is an usage frequent, and still retained among the Jews, though positively prohibited by the law: "Thou shalt not cut thy face for the sake of, or on account of, the dead †." As soon as a near relation dies in Abyssinia, a brother or parent, cousin-german or lover, every woman in that relation, with the nail of her little finger, which she leaves long on purpose, cuts the skin of both her temples, about the size of a sixpence; and therefore you see either a wound or a scar in every fair face in Abyssinia; and in the dry season, when the camp is out, from the loss of friends, they seldom have liberty to heal, till peace and the army return, with the rains. 304 765

The Abyssinians, like the ancient Egyptians, their first colony, in computing their time, have continued the use of the solar year. Diodorus Siculus says, "They do not reckon their time by the moon, but according to the sun; that thirty days constitute their month, to which they add five days and the fourth part of a day, and this completes their year. 805

These five days were, by the Egyptians, called Nici, and by the Greeks, Epagomeni, which signifies, days

* The reader will observe, by the obscurity of this passage, that it is with reluctance I have been determined to mention it at all; but as it is an historical fact, which has had material consequences, I have thought it not allowable to omit it altogether. Any naturalist, wishing for more particular information, may consult the French copy.

† Deut. chap. xiv. ver. 1.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

● 805 added, or superinduced, to complete a sum. The Abyssinians add five days, which they call Quagomi, a corruption from the Greek Epagomeni, to the month of August, which is their Nahaasse. Every fourth year they add a sixth day. They begin the year, like all the eastern nations, on the 29th or 30th day of August, that is, the kalends of September, the 29th of August being the first of their month Mascaram.

It is uncertain whence they derived the names of their months; they have no signification in any of the languages of Abyssinia. The name of the first month, among the old Egyptians, has continued to this day. It is Tot; probably so called from the first division of time among the Egyptians, from observation of the heliacal rising of the dog-star. The names of the months retained in Abyssinia are possibly in antiquity prior to this; they are probably those given them by the Cushite, before the kalendars at Thebes and Meroe, their colony, were formed.

The common epoch which the Abyssinians make use of, is from the creation of the world; but in the quantity of this period they do not agree with the Greeks, nor with other eastern nations, who reckon 5508 years from the creation to the birth of Christ. The Abyssinians adopt the even number of 5500 years, casting away the odd eight years; but whether this was first done for ease of calculation, or some better reason, there is neither book nor tradition that now can teach us. They have, besides this, many other epochs, such as from the councils of Nice and Ephesus. There is likewise to be met with in their books a portion of time, which is certainly a cycle; the Ethiopic word is kamar, which, literally interpreted, is an arch, or circle. It is not now in use in civil life among the Abyssinians, and therefore was mentioned as containing various quantities, from 100 years to 19;

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

and there are places in their history where neither of these will apply, nor any even number whatever. 805

They constantly make use of the golden number and epact in all their ecclesiastic computations: the first they call Matque, the other Abacte. Scaliger, who has taken great pains upon this confused subject, the computation of time in the church of Abyssinia, without having succeeded in making it much clearer, tells us, that the first use or invention of epacts was not earlier than the time of Dioclesian; but this is contrary to the positive evidence of Abyssinian history, which says expressly, that the epact was invented by Demetrius *, patriarch of Alexandria. "Unless," says the poet in their liturgy, "Demetrius had made this revelation by the immediate influence of the Holy Ghost, how, I pray you, was it possible that the computation of time, called Epacts, could ever have been known?" And, again, "When you meet," says he, "you shall learn the computation by epacts, which was taught by the Holy Ghost to father Demetrius, and by him revealed to you." Now Demetrius was the twelfth patriarch of Alexandria, who was elected about the 190th year of Christ, or in the reign of the emperor Severus; consequently long before the time of Dioclesian.

It seems the reputation of the Egyptians had, from very old time, for their skill in computation and the division of time, remained with them late in the days of Christianity. Pope Leo the Great, writing to the emperor Marcian, confesses that the fixing the time of the moveable feasts was always an exclusive privilege of the church of Alexandria; and, therefore,

* Encom. 12th October, Od. 3. tom. 1. Ann. Alexan. p. m. 363.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

805 says he, in his letter about reforming the kalendar, the holy fathers endeavoured to take away the occasion of this error, by delegating the whole care of this to the bishop of Alexandria; because the Egyptians, from old times, seem to have had this gift of computation given them; and when these had signified to the apostolic See the days upon which the moveable feasts were to happen, the church of Rome then notified this by writing to churches at a greater distance.

We are not to doubt that this privilege, which the church of Alexandria had been so long in possession of, contributed much to inflame the minds of the Abyssinians against the Roman Catholic priests, for altering the time of keeping Easter, by appointing days of their own; for we see violent commotions to have arisen every year upon the celebration of this festival.

The Abyssinians have another way of describing time peculiar to themselves; they read the whole of the four evangelists every year in their churches. They begin with Matthew, then proceed to Mark, Luke, and John, in order; and when they speak of an event, they write and say it happened in the days of Matthew, that is, in the first quarter of the year while the gospel of St Matthew was yet reading in the churches *.

They compute the time of the day in a very arbitrary, irregular manner. The twilight, as I have before observed, is very short, almost imperceptible, and was

* This is not correct, at least with regard to written history; for whatever books they read in the quarters, it is uniformly the practice to denote the whole year by the name of an evangelist. The days of Matthew make one year, the days of Mark a second, of Luke and John a third and fourth, and so on in rotation. The four evangelists make a period of four complete years. E.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

still more so when the court was removed farther to the southward in Shoa. As soon as the sun falls below the horizon, night comes on, and all the stars appear. This term, then, the twilight, they choose for the beginning of their day, and call it Nagge, which is the very time the twilight of the morning lasts. The same is observed at night; and Meset is meant to signify the instant of beginning the twilight, between the sun's falling below the horizon and the stars appearing. Mid-day is by them called Kater, a very old word, which signifies culmination, or a thing's being arrived or placed at the middle or highest part of an arch. All the rest of times, in conversation, they describe by pointing at the place in the heavens where the sun then was, when what they are describing happened.

I shall conclude what further I have to say on this subject, by observing, that nothing can be more inaccurate than all Abyssinian calculations. Besides their absolute ignorance in arithmetic, their excessive idleness and aversion to study, and a number of fanciful, whimsical combinations, by which every particular scribe or monk distinguishes himself, there are obvious reasons why there should be a variation between their chronology and ours. I have already observed, that the beginning of our years are different; ours begin on the 1st of January, and theirs on the 1st day of September, so that there are 8 months difference between us. The last day of August may be the year 1780 with us, and 1779 only with the Abyssinians. And in the reign of their kings they very seldom mention either month or day beyond an even number of years. Supposing, then, it is known that the reign of ten kings extended from such to such a period, where all the months and days are comprehended, when we come to assign to each of these an

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

● 805 equal number of years, without the correspondent months and days, it is plain that, when all these separate reigns come to be added together, the one sum-total will not agree with the other, but will be more or less than the just time which that prince reigned. This, indeed, as errors compensate full as frequently as they accumulate, will seldom amount to a difference above three years; a space of time too trivial to be of any consequence in the history of barbarous nations.

However, it will occur, that even this agreement is no positive evidence of the exactness of the time; for it may so happen that the sum-totals may agree, and yet every particular sum constituting the whole may be false; that is, if the quantity of errors which are too much exactly correspond with the quantity of errors that are too little. To obviate this as much as possible, I have considered three eclipses of the sun, as recorded in the Abyssinian annals. The first was in the reign of David III. the year before the king marched out to his first campaign against Maffudi the Moor, in the unfortunate war with Adel. The year that the king marched into Dawaro was 1526, after having dispatched the Portuguese ambassador, Don Roderigo de Lima, who embarked at Masuah on the 26th of April on board the fleet commanded by Don Hector de Silveyra; and the Abyssinian annals say, that, the year before the king marched, a remarkable eclipse of the sun had happened in the Ethiopic month Ter. Now, in consulting our European accounts, we find that, on the second of January, answering to the 18th day of Ter, there did happen an eclipse of the sun, which, as it was in the time of the year when the sky is cloudless both night and day, must have been visible all the time of its duration. So here our accounts do agree precisely.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

The second happened on the 13th year of the reign of Claudius, as the Abyssinian account states it. Claudius succeeded to the crown in 1540, and the 13th year of his reign will fall to be in 1553. Now we find this eclipse did happen in the same clear season of the year, that is, on the 24th of January 1553; so, in this second instance, our chronology is perfectly correct. 805

The third eclipse of the sun happened in the 7th year of the reign of Yasous II., in Magabit, the seventh month of the Abyssinians. Now Yasous came to the crown in 1729, so that the 7th year of his reign will be in 1736, and on the 4th day of October, answering to the 8th day of the month Tekemt, N .S. In that year, we see this eclipse observed in Europe.

As a further confirmation of this, we have stated the particulars of a comet which, the Abyssinian annals say, appeared at Gondar in the month of November, in the 9th year of the reign of Yasous I.; and as this comet was observed in Europe to have come to its perihelion in December 1689, and as that year, according to our account, was really the 9th of that king's reign, no further proof of the exactness of our chronology can possibly be required. By means of these observations, counting backward to the time of Icon Amlac, and again forward to the death of Joas, which happened in 1768, and assigning to each prince the number of years that his own historians say he reigned, I have, in the most unexceptionable manner that I can devise, settled the chronology of this country; and the exact agreement it has with all the remarkable events, regularly and sufficiently vouched, plainly shews the accuracy of this method. If, therefore, in a few cases, I differ two or three years from the Jesuits in their first account of this country, I do not in any shape believe the fault to be mine; be-

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

805 cause there are, at all these periods, errors in point of fact, both in Alvarez and Tellez, much more material and unaccountable than the mistake of a few years; and these errors have been adopted with great confidence in the Hispania Illustrata, and some of the best books of Portuguese history which have made mention of this country.

[pp. 43-end not processed for the files.- (vol.5) Analyst]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

the Angrab and Kahha, is the Mahometan town. These rivers inclose the town on its N. and S. sides, and join on the W. On the S. E. part of it is the church of Debra-berhan. On the N. E. is Kedus Gabriel. Two suburbs above Kedus Gabriel, is Anta Naggar, the hill, where, till Yasous's time, the Tigre, in consequence of a proclamation, were obliged to halt, and not allowed to enter Gondar. 361

In Abyssinia there remains not a shadow of the hospitality, which is said to be a trait in the character of barbarous nations. 574

They divide the day into five parts (humisi). From the twilight, which is here short, it is nagga; about nine it is called selest, or the third hour; mid-day is kutter; three o'clock, tessaat; and sun-set, serk. They judge by the height of the sun, having neither clocks nor watches. The other hours mentioned in their books are counted 1, 2, 3, &c. after dawn, sun-rise, or sun-set. 805

There are two kinds of monarchy; one is absolute, where there are no written laws, but the will of the prince carried into effect by his command and force; another is, where there are laws and restraints, but these occasionally broken through. The Abyssinian government is neither of those. There are no laws: the lives of the king's subjects and their lands are *de jure* his; he is absolute and sole master of their lives and property: Yet he has no military force; this is all in the hands of the governors of provinces, whose safety lies in keeping the prince in want of every thing. It is a monstrous kind of monarchy, and to this are owing the continual wars and rebellions. While the districts were small, these were prevented; but minorities, weak reigns, &c. have united them into great ones, each of which are more than a match for the sovereign; indeed, the forty-four nagareets of Tigre united are more than a match for all Abyssinia. Damot and Agow-midre, joined to Maitsha, when they please, starve the capital, and leave the king not only without army and provisions, but even meat and clothes for himself. The Turkish and Galla wars have accelerated this state of affairs. Each of the governments have become a kind of fiefs, very rarely not granted to the family of the deceased, and that one of it most likely to be serviceable. 642 631

[p. 53]

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

[pp. 1-57 have been omitted from the files.-
Analyst]

CHAPTER IV

SOME OF THEIR HABITS AND CUSTOMS

197 Reference has already been made to the number of languages spoken in the country. Of these, the principal is Amharic, and of the Semitic languages of the world it is, according to Mr Armbruster, spoken by a greater number of people than any other, with the 212 exception of Arabic. Its difficulty may be gauged by the fact that there are over two hundred letters in the alphabet, and consequently the number of guides to the language guaranteed to teach it in half a dozen lessons by correspondence is limited.

I am bound to say, however, in mitigation of this apparently insurmountable barrier to learning Amharic, that these characters represent syllables and not letters, and are variations of about thirty-seven root characters.

197 The next most important language is Galla, a Hamitic tongue which is spoken and understood by all the different branches of Galla throughout the various districts inhabited by them; in addition Tigré is spoken in Eritrea, and Tigréin in the province of Tigré; both of these are Semitic languages, as is also the ancient Geze or Geuze tongue, which is to the Abyssinians much as Latin was to the English people in the Middle Ages.

805 But if their language is difficult their calendar is simpler than ours, for instead of having months of differing lengths, they divide the year into twelve

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

months of thirty days each and a thirteenth month of five days, called Quagme, (or Pagme), adding a sixth day to Quagme in leap year. 805

Their year starts on the 1st day of Maskaram, which normally corresponds to our 11th September; it is on and from that day up to the end of our year seven years behind the European date; on and after the 1st January, until the 5th Quagme (our 10th September), it is eight years behind.

But in endeavouring to translate dates from Abyssinian to European computation bad snags await the unwary. In the first place the introduction of the 6th Quagme in their leap year throws all the dates between September and the following February back a day. The Abyssinian year following their leap year (which incidentally precedes ours!) begins on our 12th September instead of 11th September and continues a day behind time until our 29th February, when it is automatically readjusted. And if the translator wishes to compare dates prior to the present century he will find further joys in store for him. For the Abyssinians have counted as leap years the three years we do not (though they are properly leap years), viz.: 1700, 1800, and 1900. Nor do they take account of the additional day we dropped in 1800, nor, I think, of the ten days omitted from our calendar in 1582. So they gradually picked up fourteen days out of the seven (or eight) years that they were (and are) behind. This probably explains why their year starts on 11th September instead of 29th August, as in the case of most Eastern nations.

The difference in the number of years between their computation and ours is possibly due (i) to their

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
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805 adoption of the Alexandrian era recognizing 5500 years from the creation to the birth of Christ, which was placed three years *before* that given by the Dionysian era (*i.e.* 5502 B.C. 29th August); and (ii) to their adoption of the Diocletian era, which dropped ten years out of the calendar in A.D. 284. Thus they lost ten years and gained three or two according to the date to be computed.

A similar result would have been attained had they adopted, in lieu of the above, the calculation made by the Egyptian monk Ponodorus who (*circa* A.D. 400) struck ten years off the age of the world and placed the Incarnation three years after the then accepted date, thus forming the "mundane era of Antioch" which was adopted by the Christians of Syria. It is possible that this was the era adopted by the Abyssinians; it is so stated to be in some of their old manuscripts.

Abyssinian				European	
A.M.	A.D.	Month	Days	Months and Days	A.D.
7427	1927	Maskaram	1st to 30th	11 Sept. to 10 Oct.	1934
"	"	Tekemt	"	11 Oct. " 9 Nov.	"
"	"	Hidar	"	10 Nov. " 9 Dec.	"
"	"	Tasas	"	10 Dec. " 8 Jan.	1935
"	"	Tirr	"	9 Jan. " 7 Feb.	"
"	"	Yakatit	"	8 Feb. " 9 March	"
"	"	Magabit	"	10 March " 8 April	"
"	"	Mazya	"	9 April " 8 May	"
"	"	Gimbot	"	9 May " 7 June	"
"	"	Sane	"	8 June " 7 July	"
"	"	Hamle	"	8 July " 6 Aug.	"
"	"	Nahasse	"	7 Aug. " 5 Sept.	"
"	"	Quagme	1st to 6th	6 Sept. " 11 Sept.	"
7428	1928	Maskaram	1st to 30th	12 Sept. " 11 Oct.	"
"	"	Tekemt	"	12 Oct. " 10 Nov.	"
"	"	Hidar	"	11 Nov. " 10 Dec.	"
"	"	Tasas	"	11 Dec. " 9 Jan.	1936
"	"	Tirr	"	10 Jan. " 8 Feb.	"
"	"	Yakatit	"	9 Feb. " 9 March	"

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
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The Abyssinian calendar for *their* current year (leap year for them) accordingly compares with ours as shewn on the previous page; and in the last month given, the calendar resumes its normal correspondence with ours as, owing to the occurrence of our leap year, February has an extra day in 1936.

Apart from their language, there are many customs and practices amongst the Abyssinians which differentiate them sharply from most of the other peoples of Africa, and not the least interesting of these are clearly traceable to their ancient connection with Israel, of which they speak with pride in their old records.

For example, much of their religious pageantry, which is described in detail elsewhere, is undoubtedly a remarkable survival of rites which must have been introduced by the earliest Jewish arrivals, such as the Dance of the Priests, their ceremonies connected with the Tabot, and many others. Similarly, their method of slaughtering cattle for food, the division of animals into clean and unclean, etc., are all indications pointing in the same direction.

Their dislike of Jews to-day is accordingly the more remarkable, and must be due to the sanguinary wars which took place from the fourth to the tenth centuries between the newly-converted Christians and those who remained Jews.

Among other customs which are peculiar and interesting, pride of place must surely be given to their fondness for raw meat or *broundo*. This form of diet is preferred to any other by the mass of the population, and indeed by practically all sections thereof, beef being liked better than mutton.

When we were on trek our men could be given no

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

world. Some are purely descriptive, like the notion that *budā* turn into hyenas after dark or ride hyenas like horses, or the belief that when red spots appear on the side of a clay pot when it is heated over a fire it means that the *ṭayb* who made the pot are fighting each other. Others guide him in warding off the evil ones, such as the idea that evil spirits can be kept away when a female child has been born by placing something of iron at the head of the mother's bed. But for serious trouble—when someone has been afflicted by a *zār* or infected by a *budā*—the folk wisdom does not suffice, and a specialist is sought.

The *ṭanquāy*, or "sorcerer," is consulted for exorcising demons as well as for physical ailments. In treating a *zār* patient his task is to discern, by clever interrogation, what manner of *zār* is riding the patient and then to determine what sort of gift is required to propitiate this *zār*. For a patient who has been "eaten" by the evil eye, he may succeed in summoning the guilty *budā*—identified when the patient calls out his name during a trance—and inducing him to spit on his victim; or he may resort to such techniques as transferring the demon from the victim to the body of a chicken and then killing the chicken. The *ṭanquāy* has other supernatural powers. He can summon the devil to liquidate the enemy of a client. He can interpret dreams and predict the future. For this he boils coffee, burns incense, and, sitting on a white sheepskin with freshly cut grass spread about the room, speaks out whatever comes to him.

The *dabtarā*, thanks to his knowledge of books and the lore acquired sub rosa while attending the church schools, wields many more powers than does the *ṭanquāy*. He can write amulets to keep away sickness and evil spirits. He knows formulas that can protect one from bullets and instill insatiable passion in the breast of one's beloved. He has the power to bring rain or make it stop, and to plague the householder by turning all of his possessions against him. Like the *ṭanquāy*, his expert knowledge of plants and herbs can heal the sick or poison the client's enemy. His superiority over the *ṭanquāy* is shown by the different manner in which he arranges a divination: he consults his heavy books, brews and interprets leaves, and then writes out his predictions on paper. For all this the *dabtarā*'s fees are usually higher, but his status is perhaps more precarious, for he is after all a man of the church. The peasant feels none too easy in dealing with one who both serves the church and deals with devils.

Time and Space[7]

Devils, *zār*, evil eye, and sorcery are hidden in the crevices of Amhara mentality. They are spoken of, if at all, somewhat fearfully, and some Amhara pretend that such things no longer exist or are of little account in their culture. The sacred spirits, on the other hand, loom large in the public mind.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Besides dominating Abyssinian ritual activity, they constitute the major foci for the organization of time and space.

In the Abyssinian world view, time is not rationalized for secular purposes. Some peasants calculate the hour by the shadows on mountains, but the effort is not taken very seriously. Units of time are of little concern in the workaday world. When a man says he is going on a trip "tomorrow," everyone assumes that he means he *may* be leaving a few days later. Many appointments are made, but few are kept literally; so that the phrase *hābashā qaṭaro* ("Abyssinian appointment") has come to signify an appointment to which one comes quite late or not at all. There is little sense of time in the abstract. When an Amhara peasant is asked how long a certain trip takes, he does not reply "ten hours," but rather: "If you leave here at dawn you will arrive there before it turns dark"; and his estimate of the arrival time tends to vary according to whether or not he wants the questioner to make the trip.

Historical time is still more vaguely conceived than local time. The Amhara peasant has little sense or knowledge of history. He considers all that happened before Menelik's day as "ancient times," and more or less as an undifferentiated period. He knows very few of the earlier emperors, no historical dates, and often not even the exact year, let alone date, of his own birth. He has no idea when the church in his area was built and no interest in preserving such historical monuments or mementos as may exist in his country.

When, as often happens, anecdotes about historical figures are retold around the fireplace, the interest is not in the historical context or significance of the story but in the cleverness or heroism of the characters. Much attention is paid to genealogical lines insofar as they are relevant to potential litigation regarding rights to the use of land, but not with any concern for an objective account of historical connections. In fact, the same man may give differing accounts of the way in which he is related to a given ancestor, depending on the practical interest which underlies his recitation.[8]

With regard to his religious calendar, however, the Amhara peasant is acutely conscious of the passage of time. This concern is symbolized by a ceremony held in the churches after Mass at the beginning of each new year. A *dabtarā* stands before the people and calculates the dates for the important holidays and fasts during the coming year. Sometimes this exercise is preceded by relating the story of Demetrios, the man who after long struggles succeeded in discovering the formula by which the Orthodox calendar can be computed—so that, for example, the short fast before Lent will begin on a Monday.

The symbols of this calendar are the names of the saints. Each group of four years is named after the Four Gospels, with that of St. John (*Yohānnes*) representing leap year. The customary greeting at New Year's is of the form:

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

"May He bring you safely from the year of Mark to the year of Luke!" Nearly every day of the month, moreover, is dedicated to some holy figure, the main ones being:

Day of Month	Name	Meaning
1st	*Ledatā*	Birth of Mary
5th	*Abbo*	St. Gabra Manfas Qeddus
7th	*Selassie*	Trinity
12th	*Mikā'ēl*	St. Michael
16th	*Kidāna Maherat*	Covenant of Mercy (for Mary)
19th	*Gabre'ēl*	St. Gabriel
21st	*Māryām*	St. Mary
23rd	*Giyorgis*	St. George
24th	*Takla Hāymānot*	St. Takla Hāymānot
27th	*Madhānē Alam*	Savior of the World
29th	*Bāla Wald*	Festival of the Son

This schedule is well implanted in the peasant's mind, so much so that the names of these holy days come to take the place of calendar dates. Thus, instead of saying "He fell sick on the fifth" or "He is due to come on the twelfth," the Amhara normally says "He fell sick on Abbo" or "He is due to come on Mikā'ēl."

Time for the Amhara is thus not a morally indifferent and qualitatively undifferentiated continuum. It is a series of occasions with more or less sacred significance. These occasions are arranged in the form of cycles. In contrast to the Catholic calendar with its different saint for each day of the year, every month in Abyssinia repeats the same set of saints' days. Each year, of course, repeats the same cycle of annual holidays. The years themselves do not run on continuously, but follow the cycle—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—again and again. For the more learned, finally, there is a twenty-eight-year cycle which must elapse before the same year begins on the same day of the week again.

The Amhara's experience of time is thus essentially cyclical. The religious calendar, the most important dimension of time for him, consists of a series of epicycles, in which the monthly rounds play themselves out within the larger circles of annual and quadrennial rounds. Historical events are at best secondary: the seasons come and go, generations come and go, but there is not much new under the sun. The better-known prophecies foretell the return of some state of things that obtained in the past. Kassa chose the throne name of Tēwodros II because of the prophecy that a king with that name would arise to repeat the mythically fortunate reign of Tēwodros I of the fifteenth century. In this century has arisen the prophecy of another Tēwodros to come. Still another prophecy—of a short-lived invasion of Ethio-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

pia by a Muslim from the East—suggests a repetition of the Grāñ episode. Finally, there is the previously mentioned conception of the end of the world as a time of renewal, when those who died first will return to life and history will begin again.

Space, like time, is not regarded as an amoral and homogeneous continuum to be submitted to systematic measurement. Land is not something to be bought or sold at will, but belongs by right to a family, a church, or a ruling line. Land titles are defined loosely, by convention and approximation, and the Amhara peasantry have objected to attempts by the government to make exact measurements of their land. The reluctance to rationalize space is conspicuous even in the capital of Ethiopia, where to this day there are no street numbers, so that places can only be identified roughly as near a certain police station or past a certain hospital. Directions are indicated with difficulty. The points of the compass are almost never used, though there are words for the four directions. Instead, the vague terms for "up" and "down" serve to answer almost every question about location.

Though the peasants are often unclear about the precise boundaries of various place names in the countryside, they do know just where the several churches are located over a wide area. It is customary for them to locate a given place by reference to the nearest church. Thus they will say: "He lives below Abbo" or "We must travel above Mikā'ēl." As a result, locations in space are identified by the same set of co-ordinates as are events in time, namely, the names of the saints. Moreover, just as certain months each year are occasions for special celebrations in behalf of each sacred figure, so in the countryside certain churches are considered especially holy shrines. Thus, there is special veneration for *Ṭerr Māryām* ("St. Mary's Day in the month of Ṭerr") and Gishēn Māryām ("St. Mary's Church in the district of Gishēn").

The dominant configuration in the Amhara's experience of space is that of concentric circles. Whether or not we try to relate this to the cyclical organization of time, the fact remains that the pattern of a charged center surrounded by circles of decreasing significance recurs in the main areas of Amhara life.

It appears, first, in his architecture. The traditional peasant home is round, with a conical roof supported by a pole that rises in the center of the circle. This is the domestic inner sanctum, a room for eating and talking and getting warm by the fire. It is often separated by a circular partition from sections that serve for storage, cooking, and animals. The compound in which the home stands is surrounded in some regions by a stone or brush fence, a boundary that separates the residential kin group from the whole outside world.

This pattern is more fully developed in the churches, which are round like the huts but larger and contain two concentric circular partitions inside. The

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

familiar with in more industrialized societies. Nor is there any disposition to improvise improvements with what facilities are available. Little attention is paid to the condition of offices, for example, which are normally located in dark, drab, depressing rooms. Furthermore, the operating procedures of Ethiopian administration are bound to frustrate those who have been conditioned to more rationalized systems of organization. Departments frequently operate with ex post facto budgets. Filing systems are hopelessly archaic. There is virtually no public consciousness of the importance of work *time*.

> Ethiopian persons are not geared to a timetable. I have to keep telling myself: "This is how we do it here." Seeing a ten-story building go up in a month, grass and all—that is not for here. . . . I get most annoyed when I cannot finish some matter as promised. Not wanting to reveal the name of my colleague or superior who is holding up the action, I have to make up excuses. Eventually I run out of excuses and this bothers me. . . . Sometimes I get angry and say: "I have given my word to someone, and must have the matter ready today; please sign it." And am told: "Oh, well, don't rush things so."

Work relationships have frequently exasperated the returnees. There has been little inclination to give technically competent employees proper jurisdiction over the personnel in their departments. Technically uneducated superiors have tended to make unrealistic demands—for example, requesting an immediate report on a complicated question that requires weeks to prepare. On the other hand, they have tended to assume that their age and experience are equivalent to the technical knowledge of the foreign-trained, so that technically warranted projects have been casually dismissed because they do not strike the fancy of the superior.

The returnees have not been so despondent about these conditions which, after all, could be changed—than they are about the apparent futility of trying to change them. Older employees are quick to resent alterations in the accustomed order.

> My efforts to reform are opposed by most of the men who run the [postal] system now. Some of them have been working there for forty years or so, and they want to keep things just the way they were when mail came in on camels, because they have always done it that way.

Such resistance to change at the workaday level is tacitly supported by those in the upper echelons of authority—the new nobility. In them the returnees have found their main antagonists and from them have received their most painful lacerations.

The *shamäggelotch*, or "elders," as they are termed by the intelligentsia, have by no means presented a solidary front in opposition to the young modernizers. On the contrary, the attitude of the new nobility toward the

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

quently required. Depending upon the contingency being investigated, the names of other individuals may also be included; for example, in divination concerning litigation, the judge's name is asked.

Dates. The Amhara group years into cycles of four, naming each year after one of the four evangelists. Thus, 1956 is the year (zemene), of Yowhanis, 1957 of Matiyows, 1958 of Markows, 1959 of Luwkows, 1960 of Yowhanis, and so on. Each year is assigned a numerical value (for example, zemene Yowhanis is two). Months, days, and diurnal count (day is six, night is fourteen) each are numbered.

Directions. Each of the eight cardinal and intermediary points is numbered.

The numerical values of all required input information are totaled, and this total is then divided by a factor indicated in the text. The debtera's goal is the numerical remainder of this division; it is this figure that indicates which of the text's numbered entires is relevant to the subject (that is, the person about whom the debtera is divining).

Broadly speaking, there are two categories of awdunigist texts. The first consists of largely redundant "astrological" (kokob) texts. These texts are based on the assumption that the course of any person's life on earth can be revealed by learning with which of twelve